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Biographical sketch of Sir I. Pitman

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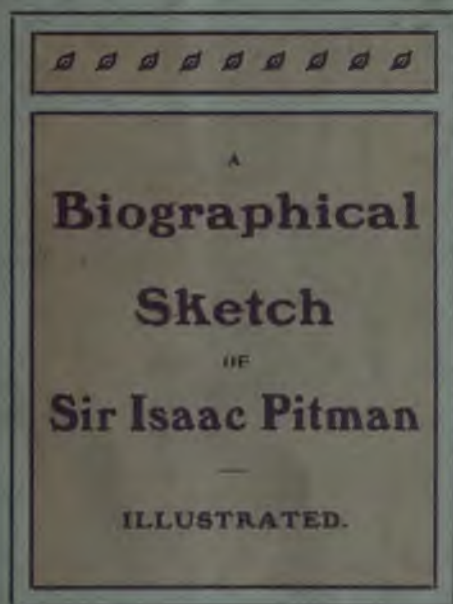
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Conference of the  
Incorporated Phonographic Society,  
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PRESENTATION SOUVENIR.





SIR ISAAC PITMAN  
(1813-1897).



A  
Biographical Sketch  
OF  
Sir Isaac Pitman

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A  
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH  
OF  
SIR ISAAC PITMAN.

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ISAAC PITMAN was born at Trowbridge, a Wiltshire town ten miles east of Bath, on 4th January, 1813, and the first eighteen years of his life were spent at his birthplace. The town is largely occupied in the manufacture of cloth, and his father, Samuel Pitman (b. 1787. d. 1863), was an overseer in a cloth factory. He received his early education in the Trowbridge Grammar School. Owing, however, to the fact that the ill-ventilated schoolroom proved prejudicial to his health, he left the school in his thirteenth year. Educational facilities were far less common then than in the present day, but his father provided those opportunities for further study which are now so easily accessible to every class. The services of a teacher were secured, and a home evening school carried on; in addition, standard works were obtained from London for the use of the family. Isaac Pitman was an earnest student, and not only made himself acquainted with the writings of our great authors, but mastered several branches of knowledge, including Greek. The book, however, which more than any other was destined to have an influence on his life's work, was "Walker's

Dictionary." He made a close study of this volume, and especially of the "Principles of English Pronunciation," formulated by the author.

After leaving school he occupied a stool in the counting-house of the factory in which his father was manager, and subsequently filled a similar position in his father's counting-house, when the latter became a manufacturer. In August, 1831, it was decided that he should become a school teacher, and he left his home for a course of training at the British and Foreign School Society's College, Borough Road, London. Of his nine brothers and sisters, five became teachers in addition to himself. In January, 1832, at the age of nineteen, he was sent to take charge of an endowed school at Barton-on-Humber, a market town in North Lincolnshire, six miles southwest of Hull. Four years later he removed, in January, 1836, to the Gloucestershire town of Wotton-under-Edge. Here, under a Nonconformist School Committee, he established and conducted with success a school on the British and Foreign School system.

The circumstances which led Isaac Pitman to direct his attention to the invention of a new system of shorthand were thus related by himself. In speaking on the subject to an assembly of phonographers eight years later, at a time when the writers of the new system formed already a large and powerful body, he explained that he wrote Taylor's system of shorthand for about seven years, and desired that an art that had proved so useful to himself in the saving of time, should be generally taught in British, National, and all other schools. There was, however, no cheap manual in existence. He had become acquainted with Mr. Samuel Bagster, the eminent Bible publisher, from the fact that two years before he had voluntarily undertaken and completed the revision of the references in the "Comprehensive" Bible published by the latter, and

to Mr. Bagster, in the spring of 1837, he forwarded the MS. for a cheap manual of Taylor's system. The manuscript was submitted to the judgment of a skilful reporter, who pronounced against the republication of a system already on the market, and, in sending this opinion, Mr. Bagster intimated that if an original system were prepared by his correspondent, he would readily take charge of it.

Isaac Pitman at once set about the work, and throughout the summer all his leisure hours were devoted to experiments in the construction of shorthand alphabets. The whole of his summer holiday of three weeks was given up to the undertaking. It was some time before the young inventor decided to abandon the conventional but unnatural pairing of the vowels exhibited in most grammars and dictionaries of the period. At last he tried the experiment of writing the vowel in *pin* with the same sign as the vowel in *pea*; *met* with the same sign as *may*, etc., except that the dots were lighter in the first word of each pair. He had little confidence in any good results from this classification, but he had, in fact, discovered the true phonetic arrangement. "I saw the truth," he exclaims, "practised it, and it became delightful. In a few months I got clear of the shallow waters and breakers of our present orthography, and committed myself to the boundless deep of phonographic writing." The classification of the consonants was next taken in hand, and the marking of *p*, *t*, etc., by light strokes, and *b*, *d*, etc., by heavy ones, was fully carried out. He had noticed the frequent recurrence of *l* and *r* in immediate or near communication with other consonants, as in *please*, *bread*, etc., and, after many experiments, found that the best way of expressing the two letters by one stroke, was by hooking the letter with which *l* or *r* comes in contact. Hooks were accordingly provided for the straight letters. The

inventor was, however, content to give the consonants in *b, c, d* order, hoping that, if his work met with favour, he might in another edition give them in their natural order. A shorthand system on which a larger amount of inventive skill was expended than it is possible to describe, was at last finished, and the manuscript sent to Mr. Bagster. On 15th November, 1837, "Stenographic Sound-hand, by Isaac Pitman," made its appearance. In the introduction, the inventor set forth the advantages of a system of shorthand written by sound over methods which followed the current orthography. "The shorthand alphabet," he said when speaking at the Jubilee of Phonography, "given in the first edition of Phonography, contains the elements of the present matured system, but in several of its details it was imperfect, because it proceeded from a finite mind. These imperfections were discovered by experience and removed." Not long after his famous system of short-



**FIRST PHONETIC INSTITUTE, 1839-1851.**

No. 5 Nelson Place, Bath, opposite Norfolk Crescent, was occupied by Isaac Pitman at Midsummer, 1839. In 1845 the production of his own books was commenced in a large room on the ground floor.



hand was introduced to the world, he was dismissed from his mastership at Wotton, the school committee having taken exception to a change which had occurred in his religious views. In June, 1839, he settled in Bath, and established a private school at No. 5 Nelson place.

In the same year the First Edition of his shorthand work was exhausted. In the interval which had elapsed since its first appearance, Isaac Pitman had been more earnestly engaged in the improvement of his system than in its propagation. In the summer of 1839 he paid a visit to his friend, Mr. Bagster, at the latter's residence at Old Windsor. The talk turned on a second edition of his shorthand treatise, and both expressed a desire for a shorter title. Its author remarked that a compound of two Greek words, *φωνη*, *sound* or *voice*, and *γραφη*, *writing*, combined as "Phonography," accurately described the new method of writing, but the word was not in existence in English. So he thought at the time. "That must be the title," said Mr. Bagster, "it is a new name for a new thing." Isaac Pitman subsequently learned that the word "Phonography" had been previously used as the title of an almost unknown work published by John Jones, M.D., in 1701, devoted to a system devised for teaching reading and spelling in the common orthography.

The Penny Post was established on 10th January, 1840, and Isaac Pitman availed himself of this auspicious occasion to issue the Second Edition of his system, in the shape of an engraved plate, to which for the first time the name of Phonography was applied, the full title running, "Phonography, or Writing by Sound, being also a New and Natural System of Short Hand." Several important improvements were introduced in the Second Edition, including the natural arrangement of the consonants in *p, b; t, d* order, an arrangement never before adopted in any shorthand treatise; initial

hooks to curved letters were introduced ; also the halving of a letter to signify the addition of *l* or *d*, and signs for the diphthongs and the *w* and *y* series. The steel plate was beautifully engraved, but the compression of the whole of the rules and illustrations of the system within a space of 8 in. by 6½ in. necessitated the use of almost microscopic characters, so that the plate was not well adapted to become a medium for learning the system. Copies of the Second Edition were, however, widely distributed gratuitously to schoolmasters in all parts of the country, and, when these had been well circulated, Isaac Pitman began his phonographic propaganda, by devoting his school holidays to lecturing tours.

The Third Edition of the system was brought out at the close of 1840, in the form of a demy 8vo book, with fuller explanations and rules, and altogether better adapted for the purpose of instruction. About this time the nine brothers and sisters of the inventor had acquired the art, and they communicated with each other by means of a manuscript magazine, to which the name of Evercirculator was first applied. In his Christmas holidays in December, 1840, Isaac Pitman visited a number of places between Bath and Oxford, and at the University city left copies of the system at most of the colleges. In his holiday in Midsummer, 1841, he visited many places between Bath and Glasgow, including Edinburgh and Newcastle-on-Tyne. In these lectures his highest hope was the popularization of shorthand, and his line of advocacy has been very aptly described by Mr. T. A. Reed. "His shorthand scheme," he writes, "was propounded not as a mere professional instrument in the hands of the reporter, or an occasional aid to the student, but as a method of saving a large proportion of the time ordinarily spent in writing. He boldly asserted that his

system was applicable to all, or almost all, the purposes to which longhand is applied, and he especially advocated its use for all kinds of correspondence. Enforcing the maxim that 'to save time is to prolong life,' he invited all his countrymen to become phonographers, and waxed eloquent on the benefits that would inevitably flow therefrom." ("Biography of Isaac Pitman," page 33.)

The Fourth Edition of Phonography appeared at the close of 1841, and this was in the form of a large sheet printed from letterpress, with wood engravings of the shorthand characters. In the former editions the erroneous principle had been followed of making every shorthand letter represent several words in which the sound of such letter was heard, and consequently there were numbers of logograms for words very rarely used. In this edition the number was greatly reduced, but it was not until the Seventh Edition that the total was reduced to a list of real usefulness.

While lecturing and teaching at Manchester, it was proposed to Isaac Pitman by some of the phonographers of the town that a monthly periodical should be issued in lithographed Phonography. He tried an experiment by writing a page, which turned out very well, and the result was the production of the "Phonographic Journal, No. I, January, 1842," consisting of eight small pages of lithographed shorthand, of which one thousand copies were printed. This publication was the first issue of any periodical printed in shorthand, and is noteworthy not for that alone, but for the fact that henceforward for many years lithography was destined to play, in the hands of the inventor, an important part in the propagation and cultivation of Phonography. Under different names and forms the periodical just mentioned has been continued from that time to the present, and is now issued weekly as *Pitman's Phonetic Journal*.



In the summer of 1841 Isaac's next younger brother, Joseph Pitman, commenced teaching and lecturing, and in the following year was joined by another brother, Benn Pitman. Thanks to their labours, the cultivation of the new art extended with such rapidity that in 1843 Isaac Pitman found it necessary to give up his school, and to abandon travelling and lecturing, in order to devote himself entirely to the production of instruction books and other literature. His assistance in the lecturing field was, in fact, less needful, as many able phonographers were now engaged in all parts in lecturing and teaching, including two other brothers, Henry Pitman and Frederick Pitman, and Mr. Reed (one of his earliest disciples and his biographer). The history of this enthusiastic phonographic propaganda has been written by the last named, and we can only pause to note here one remarkable feature in connection with it, namely, the Phonographic Festivals at which the progress already made was reviewed, and workers in the phonographic cause were stimulated to fresh exertions. At several of these gatherings Isaac Pitman was among the speakers.

The year 1843 witnessed the establishment of the first phonographic society. Mr. Reed suggested to Isaac Pitman the desirability of establishing a "Phonographic Corresponding Society," to consist of those who desired to correspond with and assist each other in shorthand study, and the result was the issue of a first list of members in March of that year. The title was altered soon after the publication of the first annual list of members, to that of the Phonetic Society. The successive presidents were Mr. George Dawson, Sir Walter Trevelyan, Bart., and Professor Max-Müller. Annual lists of members were published down to 1892, when the Jubilee list contained 5,098 names. From the commencement Isaac Pitman was the secretary, but when

he retired from the Phonetic Institute, the enrolment of members was discontinued. The large number of associations in existence all over the country, the fact that Pitman's Shorthand is everywhere taught, and also that Pitman's certificates had been graded and issued independently of it, rendered the further existence of the Phonetic Society organization, which in the past had proved so helpful to its members under the superintendence of the inventor of Phonography, no longer necessary.

The Fifth Edition of Phonography made its appearance in August, 1842, the principal improvement effected in the system being the introduction of the sign for the downward *r*. The edition appeared in three forms, but the most popular was an extremely neat pocket edition, demy 32mo, bound in roan, with gilt edges. The system was in this work presented with clear and comprehensive rules for writing, and with copious illustrative examples. We may here, perhaps, most conveniently notice the improvements introduced in the succeeding four editions, confining our notice only—as we have done up to the present—to those characters which are now employed in the system with the same significance. In the Sixth Edition (1844) the loops *st* and *str* were introduced, and the half-length letters were reduced to order, every letter adding *t* or *d* on being halved. In the Seventh Edition (1845) the final *n* hook was first used as we have it now, and the *-tion* hook was introduced, but not with the large hook now used. The Eighth Edition (1847) introduced the *n* hook before the treble consonants *spr*, etc. In the Ninth Edition (1852) the series of disyllabic diphthongs and *wl* were introduced, and curved letters were made double length to express the addition of *thr*, *tr* or *dr*.

At the time he was so earnestly and actively engaged in the phonographic movement, Isaac Pitman had

initiated another work, to which, down to the close of his life, he devoted large sums of money and no inconsiderable portion of his time; we allude to the Spelling Reform. In 1842 he was experimenting with the forms of a phonetic printing alphabet which should consist of sufficient new letters to supplement the deficiencies of the common alphabet. In the *Phonotypic Journal* for January, 1844, he for the first time addressed his readers in phonotypy, special types having been made for the purpose by the type founders. A few months before he had become acquainted with Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Alexander John Ellis, and for some years they worked together at the Spelling Reform, among the undertakings associated with this period being the



#### SECOND PHONETIC INSTITUTE, 1851-1855.

When Mr. Ellis published the "Phonetic News" (1849) the above building, No. 1 Albion Place, Upper Bristol Road, Bath, was the printing office. In Jan., 1851, it passed into Isaac Pitman's hands, and was the "Phonetic Institution" till March, 1855. The building is now the Western Dispensary.

famous *Phonetic News*, edited by Mr. Ellis, which appeared from 6th January to 25th May, 1849. Several thousands of pounds were expended by Mr. Ellis on the periodical, but from the failure of his health he retired from the active promotion of the Spelling Reform. During the time Mr. Ellis worked with Isaac Pitman the *Phonetic Journal* underwent several changes, but eventually, in 1850, a fortnightly publication was decided on the title then becoming that given above, and the present weekly issue began on 3rd January, 1852.

The production of the shorthand books and periodicals, and later, of works in advocacy of phonetic spelling and periodicals printed in phonotypy, was commenced in December, 1845, by Isaac Pitman at his own house, 5 Nelson Place, Bath, which was the first Phonetic Institute. From 1851 to 1855 the second Phonetic Institute in Albion Place was the headquarters of Phonography and the Spelling Reform, and on the last-named date the establishment was moved to Parsonage Lane, in the centre of Bath.

Before, however, we proceed further with our narrative, account must be taken of the spread of Phonography in other parts of the world. The late Mr. Jacob Pitman, the elder brother of the inventor of Phonography, sailed for Australia in 1837, taking with him copies of his brother's system of shorthand, then just published. From that period till the time of his death in 1890, he taught Phonography in South Australia, Victoria, and New South Wales. In America Phonography had made remarkable progress since its introduction to the United States by the late Mr. Stephen Pearl Andrews, in the spring of 1844. Mr. Andrews acknowledged that the inventor of Phonography backed him very nobly in planting the American branch of the movement. In 1853 Mr. Benn Pitman went to the United States, and from that time to the present has

been actively engaged in disseminating Phonography there. In 1847, after the early phonographic campaign, Mr. Frederick Pitman undertook the London publishing of Isaac Pitman's works, and continued to do so to the time of his death in 1886, when the present depôt of Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons, at No. 1 Amen Corner, was established. Mr. Joseph Pitman's lecturing campaign extended from 1842 to 1846, and Mr. Henry Pitman, the youngest brother of the inventor, was engaged from 1840 to 1847 in travelling and lecturing, and for many years subsequently taught the system at Manchester.

To resume our narrative, the next important event in the history of Phonography was the publication of the Tenth Edition in 1857. With this edition the following improvement in the vowel scale was introduced: From *ee, eh, ah* to *ah, eh, ee*. The downward *h* and the large hook *-tion* were also introduced. Writing at the time on the change in the vowel scale, Isaac Pitman said: "So radical a change as this would not be proposed on slight grounds, nor for any reasons that I did not consider imperative. The alteration *must* be made now or at some future time. The second fundamental principle of phonetic writing, expressed in Dr. Latham's second law, is violated in the old vowel scale. That principle is, 'that sounds within a determined degree of likeness be represented by signs within the determined degree of likeness; while sounds beyond a certain degree of likeness be represented by distinct and different signs, and that uniformly.'" In a paper circulated among phonographers (from which this extract is taken), the inventor of Phonography pointed out the advantages which would accrue by bringing the vowel notation of Phonography into conformity with the rule. The proposed change occasioned a vigorous controversy, and was not favoured by Mr. Ellis. The



new vowel scale was, however, eventually accepted by English, but not by American phonographers. Mr. Benn Pitman continued to publish works in his brother's system without the alterations in the vowel scale. "These text-books," he says, "were mine: the system was not," and so it happens that Isaac Pitman's system, as it was published before 1857, is called in America the "Benn Pitman" system.

But the discussion on the change in the vowel scale did not in any way divert the feelings of gratitude which phonographers felt were due from them to the inventor of Phonography, however hostile might be the sentiments expressed by some American phoneticians. In 1859 a movement was set on foot by the leading British phonographers for testifying in some tangible form their appreciation of the art which they received from Isaac Pitman, their indebtedness for his labours, and the estimation in which they held his personal character. "It was felt," to quote the words of the Rev. C. H. E. Wyche, Chairman of the Presentation Committee, "that this would be a proof that phonographers, although divided upon some points, yet agree in the high value which they set upon their art, and in grateful feelings towards its inventor; and it would be a practical proof to the American phoneticians that many of the statements put forth in that country with respect to him were without any real foundation." In reply to this proposal, Isaac Pitman suggested that a fund should be raised for a Phonetic Institute, as a suitable home for Phonography and Phonotypy, which he thought might be erected for £1,000. He was not able to build it himself he explained, on account of his having given, not only twenty-two years of labour, but large sums of money to the cause of Writing and Spelling Reform. The idea proved too ambitious, and the presentation took another form. On 26th of June, 1862, a timepiece

and a purse of £350 were presented to him in London, at a gathering presided over by Mr. Reed.

The year 1862 was also memorable for the appearance of the Eleventh Edition with further improvements, including the duplicate hooked forms for *fr*, *vr*, *thr*, *thr*, and large hooks for *fl*, *vl*, *shl*, *ml*, *nl*; the present alphabetic characters for *w* and *y*, and the upward *h*. The *in*-prefix was introduced before the upward and downward *h*. These changes did not meet with the approval of a section of English phonographers, among those who did not adopt them being Mr. Reed, and efforts were made to perpetuate the writing of the Tenth Edition. One important result of the opposition was that Isaac Pitman decided to abandon the custom of describing new issues as editions. The last so designated was the Twelfth Edition, published in 1867, when the signs for *wl* and *lr* were introduced into the system. The further improvements in Phonography introduced by the inventor may here be summarized with advantage. In 1869 the sign for *kw* was introduced; in 1873, *wh*; in 1884 the double-length principle was extended under certain limitations, to straight characters; and in 1887, the large initial circle for *sw* was adopted.

By the time that Phonography had been in existence a quarter of a century, it had secured for itself a position such as no other system of English shorthand either before or since, has ever attained to. Not only was it more largely employed for the professional purposes to which the art had been applied before its invention but it was used in these vocations to an extent which the old systems had never been, and this was especially the case in regard to newspaper reporting. The creation and growth of the cheap Press led to the need for an army of shorthand reporters, and these were supplied from the ranks of phonographers. In the employment of the system in railway offices, a commencement had been

made with the commercial use of the art, which was destined to become so general in later years. The propaganda carried on in the forties was no longer needed because, as Mr. Reed once observed, "the most effective propagandists were those who, in their daily work, demonstrated the practicability and superiority of the system—reporters for the Press, and professional shorthand writers practising in the Law Courts."

The leading propagandists of the forties were now engaged in shorthand labour of other descriptions, but on special occasions Isaac Pitman left his work at the desk for the platform, and some of the most noteworthy of his more recent public appearances may be here recorded. When the British Association first visited Bath in 1864 he prepared a paper for the section on Economics and Statistics entitled, "Brief Writing," but though the arrangements did not permit of his reading it, the circulation of the paper in printed form directed considerable attention to the Writing and



**THIRD PHONETIC INSTITUTE,  
1855-1873.**

The illustration shows the entrance to the building in Parsonage Lane, Bath, the top floor of which was used as the Institute. It could only be reached "through dark passages and up narrow flights of stairs."



Spelling Reform. When next the British Association visited Bath, in 1888, he was more fortunate, and his address on "Economy in Education and in Writing," was followed by an interesting discussion. His annual holiday in 1883 was spent in Italy, and he had the pleasure on 1st October of inaugurating the Italian Phonetic Society, established in Rome. In 1884 he visited Edinburgh, and under the auspices of the Scottish Phonographic Association had a splendid reception. The Lord Provost (Sir George Harrison) presided at the meeting and expressed himself extremely gratified at the greeting given to one who had done so much "to increase the sum of human knowledge." Isaac Pitman also addressed the members of the Shorthand Society in the same year, Mr. Reed being the president of that body at the time, on "The Science of Shorthand." In the following year, 1885, he lectured at the Exeter Hall, under the auspices of the Young Men's Christian Association. The spacious Lower Hall proved insufficient to accommodate the throng of auditors who assembled.

For eighteen years Isaac Pitman carried on his daily work amid most unsuitable and unpleasant surroundings in Parsonage Lane, Bath. During that period a beautifully lithographed shorthand supplement was issued with each number of the *Phonetic Journal*, from transfers written by its editor. In this way the entire Bible, the Book of Common Prayer, the Church Services, Macaulay's Essays, and other standard works, made their appearance in serial form. This work involved considerable labour, but it was a pleasurable employment, and by unwearied application the inventor of Phonography was able to keep the transfer writing well in advance, so that there might be no delay in the regularity of issue. The shorthand supplements were discontinued in the year 1872, and from that period Isaac Pitman did not resume his labours with the litho-

graphic pen, owing to the increased attention which he felt it incumbent upon him to give to the Spelling Reform movement. In 1873 the present engraved shorthand characters made their first appearance in the *Phonetic Journal*, and the price was reduced to one penny.

In 1873 the lease of the third Phonetic Institute in Parsonage Lane expired, and the occasion seemed a favourable one to make a public appeal for funds to obtain an Institute in which the work could be more satisfactorily carried on. Isaac Pitman issued an address to phonographers on the subject, in which he called attention to his efforts on behalf of Phonography and the Spelling Reform, and to the fact that the personal income he had derived from the work had been merely nominal. "If phonographers," he said, in conclusion, "think that this labour, extending over the best part of a life, has been productive of pleasure and profit to them, and to the world at large, they have now an opportunity of placing me in a position to carry on the work of the Reading, Writing, and Spelling Reform more effectually. That which is done promptly is generally done well. Let us all labour in the eye of the motto—'The Future is Greater than the Past.'" He started the new building fund with the sum of £350, presented to him in 1862; Sir Walter Trevelyan contributed £100, and smaller sums were subscribed by phonographers all over the world, until upwards of



A Corner in the Third Phonetic Institute.

£1,000 was raised. With this sum a block of buildings in the Abbey Churchyard, Bath, was purchased, and the structure was converted into commodious and convenient offices as the fourth Phonetic Institute, in which the inventor of Phonography laboured from December, 1874, with an increasing band of workers, for the next fifteen years.

From the time of his installation in his new quarters down to the end of the seventies, the Spelling Reform was brought prominently before the public. With the new facilities placed at his disposal, there was a distribution of enormous quantities of literature, and the movement received a notable impetus from a deliverance of Professor Max-Müller on the subject, which appeared in the *Fortnightly Review* for April, 1876. "What I like," wrote the Professor, "in Mr. Pitman's system of spelling is exactly what I know has been found fault with by others, namely, that he does not attempt to refine too much, and to express in writing those endless shades of pronunciation, which may be of the greatest interest to the student of acoustics, or of phonetics, as applied to the study of living dialects, but which, for practical as well as for scientific philological purposes, must be entirely ignored."

Under the initiative of Dr. Gladstone, Dr. Angus, and other spelling reformers, the London School Board, on 14th March, 1877, passed a resolution for the nomination of a select committee to draw up a memorial to the Government, urging the issue of a Royal Commission for considering the best method of reforming and simplifying English spelling. A conference was held at the rooms of the Society of Arts on 29th May, 1877, under the presidency of Professor Sayce, with the object of supporting the proposal of the London School Board. Isaac Pitman was one of the speakers, and there was a meeting in the evening, at which resolutions were passed

in favour of an improvement in English orthography. The movement received considerable notice in the Press but though the *Times* recommended that in the three first standards children should be taught to read



FOURTH PHONETIC INSTITUTE, 1874-1889.

Situate at Nos. 6 and 7 Kingston Buildings, in the Abbey Churchyard, Bath. Steam power was first introduced at this Institute in the printing of the "*Phonetic Journal*." The building is now the offices of the Bath Stone Firms, Ltd.

and write on "the easy phonetic plan," it was not till sixteen years later that the barrier was removed which had hitherto excluded books in the phonetic notation from elementary schools. The promoters of the movement failed at the time to make any impression on the Government. On 18th January, 1878, the Lord President, the Duke of Richmond and Gordon, received a

deputation on Spelling Reform which included Isaac Pitman, Dr. Ellis, and many others. The Lord President promised to lay the views of the deputation before the Cabinet, but no Royal Commission was appointed, and down to 1893 successive Governments took no steps whatever for the promotion of the object the deputation had at heart. All that was possible in the shape of an appeal to "the powers that be" had, however, been done, and a Spelling Reform Association was founded in London in 1879, which secured the adhesion of many eminent men. Isaac Pitman joined it, and took part occasionally in the proceedings, while it continued. But independently of the Society, he laboured in the cause as in past years, and the growing popularity of Phonography enabled him to expend even larger sums than he had previously done in experiments on new phonetic types, and the distribution of as much free literature as the Phonetic Institute was capable of producing, which at that time was half a ton weekly. But the introduction of new types although it made possible the use of a scientifically perfect alphabet proved an insurmountable obstacle to the general adoption of phonetic printing, and after experiments with new types extending over forty years, Isaac Pitman adopted in 1883, with some additions, the rules recommended by the American Spelling Reform Association and the American Philological Society, in order to secure the phonetic representation of the language without the addition of new letters to the alphabet. The rules for this, the "first stage" of the reform, were the subject of experiment by Isaac Pitman down to the time of his death.

The early eighties were, as we have seen, almost exclusively devoted to work in connection with Spelling Reform. But in 1884 occurred the copyright action of Pitman *v.* Hine, heard in the Queen's Bench Division



before Mr. Justice Mathew on 4th, 5th, and 6th Nov. "The principal witness was," Mr. Reed says, "Mr. Pitman himself, and his appearance in the box excited a good deal of interest and curiosity among the many reporters and shorthand writers frequenting the courts, most of whom, though writers of his system, had never seen the inventor in the flesh." On the third morning, Mr. Justice Mathew gave judgment for the plaintiff, and granted the injunction asked for, observing in the course of his judgment that "if ever there was a case in which the powers of the court ought to be exercised as asked by the plaintiff, it seems to me that this is that case." His lordship gave such directions as precluded the further publication of the book which formed the subject of the action. In the Health Exhibition held the same year at South Kensington, Pitman's Shorthand was represented in the Educational Section, and received the highest and only award, a silver medal. Isaac Pitman took an active part in the arrangement of the display of shorthand books, which attracted much attention from phonographers and the general public. In 1886, in his annual address at the commencement of the year, Isaac Pitman announced that he had taken into partnership with him his two sons, Messrs. Alfred and Ernest Pitman, who for some years previously had assisted him, and that thenceforward his works would be issued by Isaac Pitman and Sons. This important change occurred at a notable epoch in the history of Phonography and the life of its inventor.

Few events in recent times have done so much to bring the importance of shorthand before the public as the first International Shorthand Congress and Jubilee of Phonography celebrated in London in 1887, under the presidency of the Earl of Rosebery, in which Isaac Pitman was the central figure. Previously, however, to the metropolitan gathering, Manchester

celebrated the Phonographic Jubilee with a meeting at which the inventor of Phonography was among the speakers. The phonographic celebration in London took place on Wednesday, 28th September. Dr. Gladstone presided at the morning conference, and valuable papers on phonographic topics were read during the morning and afternoon. In the evening the inventor of Phonography and his family were presented with his bust by Brock. Mr. Reed made the presentation, and congratulations were announced from stenographers in all parts of the world to Isaac Pitman on his life-work, concerning which Mr. Reed observed that how much money and labour he had spent in promoting what he and many others believed to be a cause bound up with the advancement of education and the general welfare of society, no one knew but himself. The Lord Mayor (Sir Reginald Hanson) entertained the members of the Congress at a luncheon at the Mansion House, and in proposing the principal toast observed that there was, he thought, no difference of opinion as to Isaac Pitman being the most eminent living inventor of shorthand in England. At Bath, on 15th November, the anniversary of the very day on which Phonography was first published fifty years before, his local friends presented him with a handsome miniature portrait. From America came, in 1888, a particularly gratifying address, accompanied by a Gold Medal, from his Transatlantic admirers. The address stated that "with few exceptions, American writers who have presented the system have frankly acknowledged their indebtedness to you as its discoverer and inventor." In 1889 a replica of the Jubilee bust was presented to Isaac Pitman by the citizens of Bath, and it was placed in the Royal Literary and Scientific Institution, Bath. The Jubilee celebrations were brought to a close on 7th March, 1889, when the English Gold Jubilee Medal was presented to Isaac

Pitman at a dinner presided over by the seventh Earl of Albemarle (then Viscount Bury), who became a phonographer owing to the fact that his attention was directed to shorthand by the Tercentenary Celebration. Referring to the indomitable energy of the guest of the evening, his lordship remarked that "the little seedling which he sowed fifty years ago was now spreading its branches over the civilized world."

During the latter portion of the occupancy of the Institute in the Abbey Churchyard, Bath, Isaac Pitman and his fellow-workers were greatly inconvenienced by limitations of space. Accordingly, a new building was erected in the suburbs of Bath, and the present Phonetic Institute was taken possession of by his sons on the very day (7th March, 1889) that the concluding honour of the Jubilee Celebration was being paid to Isaac Pitman; as already described.

The year 1890 was in many respects a remarkable one in the later history of Phonography. It saw the introduction of Shorthand into the Education Code, and Isaac Pitman witnessed at last the realization of the aspiration which had induced him to turn his attention to shorthand authorship more than half a century before, namely, that instruction in the art should be brought within the reach of every schoolboy. The Technical Instruction Act of 1889 had given shorthand an entrance to evening schools, so that a new epoch in the teaching of Pitman's Shorthand began with the year 1890. The third International Shorthand Congress was held at Munich in the summer, when the unveiling of the statue of Gabelsberger formed part of the proceedings. Isaac Pitman was present, and at one of the meetings, on the 12th August, paid a tribute to the great German shorthand author. The last day of October in this year witnessed the inauguration of the National Phonographic Society (now the Incorporated Phonographic



57 204  
- 62  
Society). Isaac Pitman took part in the proceedings, and in the informal conversazione which preceded the meeting, he received an especially fraternal greeting from the large gathering of phonographers who took part in the proceedings. In the course of his speech subsequently, he congratulated the phonographic world on the institution of the Society, and expressed his gratitude to the officers and Council for the labour they had devoted to the framing of its constitution. He was elected the first President, and continued to hold office down to his resignation in December, 1895, when he was succeeded by his eldest son, Mr. Alfred Pitman. On the 23rd of September, 1891, the winter session of the Glasgow and West of Scotland centre of the National Phonographic Society, was opened with an address on "Shorthand," by Isaac Pitman. Six days later he received a hearty reception from West of England phonographers, on lecturing on the same topic at Bristol. In the following year (1892) he spent his summer holiday in the Channel Islands, to which he then paid his first visit. Here he found that his system had gone before him, and by special request he gave a lecture on the art on 3rd August, in the Guille-Allès Library at Guernsey. In this year the Phonographic Jubilee of Mr. Reed largely occupied the attention of phonographers, and Isaac Pitman took a leading part in the movement to do honour to the famous phonographer. The presentation, which consisted of an illuminated address and a cheque, was made by Isaac Pitman, who referred in feeling terms to the fact that but few phonographers were living who could look back, as Mr. Reed did, on fifty years of phonographic activity.

In the period under notice, Isaac Pitman was more frequently on the platform than had been customary with him in recent years, and special interest attaches to what proved to be his last lecture on shorthand,

because it was given at his birthplace, Trowbridge. It was delivered on 1st December, 1892, at the Townhall. The chairman (Mr. W. Walker) made graceful allusion to the fact that the lecturer was a native of the town. Isaac Pitman gave the audience some reminiscences of his early days, and observed that when he looked back on his past career, he often thought of the words contained in the verse of Scripture, "What hath God wrought!" Before he had concluded his remarks on shorthand, he discovered by a show of hands that at least three-fourths of his audience were acquainted with his system, a fact which afforded him no small gratification. The second portion of his lecture was devoted to the advocacy of Spelling Reform. About this time Isaac Pitman made other platform appearances. The season was extremely wet, and the result was a serious attack of congestion of the lungs, and for the first time for a long period the venerable inventor of Phonography was confined to his bed. When he recovered, he removed his desk from the Institute to his residence, thus saving himself the journey to and from the Phonetic Institute, and also avoiding unnecessary exposure to the weather. While spending his holiday at Southsea in August, 1893, he took an opportunity to speak on Spelling Reform. Later in the year, on 27th September, he distributed the prizes to the students of Pitman's Metropolitan School (of which his sons had recently become the proprietors). This was the last occasion on which he spoke on the art which it had been his life work to perfect and propagate, but in his few remaining years he did not lessen his activity with his pen. He was sought out also by the interviewer, and through the medium of many popular periodicals, as well as in publications issued by himself, he gave to the world his views on Shorthand, Spelling Reform, and other subjects.

It was while engaged at his desk at his home in the Royal Crescent, that he received the following letter :

10 Downing Street, Whitehall,  
21st May, 1894.

MY DEAR MR. PITMAN,—

It is with great pleasure that I make the intimation to you that the Queen has been pleased to confer on you the honour of Knighthood. I have recommended this distinction on the ground of your great services to Stenography, and the immense utility of that art. It was always a cherished hope of mine to obtain a recognition of these, which it is a sensible satisfaction to have realized.

Yours truly,  
ROSEBERRY.

When the tidings of the honour which Queen Victoria proposed to confer upon the "Father of Phonography" became known, the Press of the United Kingdom of all shades of opinion joined in a chorus of approval. The *Daily News* aptly expressed the general sentiment in the remark that "Another of the new knights whose title will be welcome to the whole public is Isaac Pitman, the founder of the great system of shorthand which will always be associated with his name. The knighthood becomes more and more an order of merit as it takes account of the services of such men." Addresses of congratulation reached the new knight from Shorthand Writers' Associations in all parts of the British Empire, and from the House of Commons came a congratulatory address written in shorthand, and bearing the shorthand signatures of Members of Parliament acquainted with the art.

The accolade of knighthood was bestowed by Queen Victoria at Windsor Castle on the following 18th July. Soon afterwards Sir Isaac Pitman retired from partnership with his sons, and conferred on them his interests in the phonographic text-books and other works of which he was the author. The arrangements were, in fact, commenced in the early spring, but they were

delayed by the absence of his sons in America, and were not finally completed till 10th August, 1894. At the time of his retirement, Sir Isaac had been uninterruptedly engaged in the work connected with his invention of Phonography for fifty-seven years, and had edited the *Phonetic Journal* for fifty-two years, a record in both respects quite unique in our history.

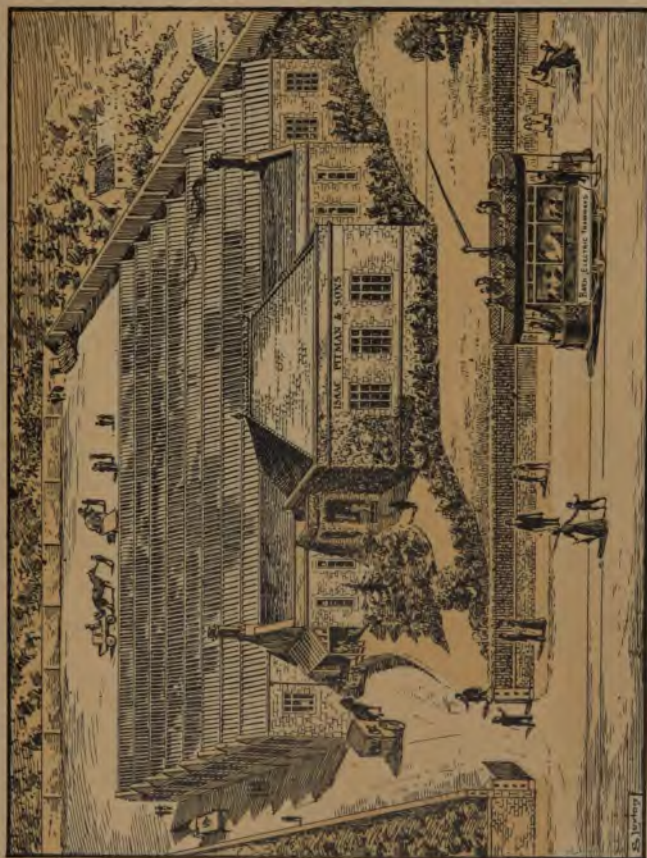
After the event just mentioned, Sir Isaac engaged with all his old ardour in his efforts on behalf of Spelling Reform, and, as in times past, kept up a very extensive correspondence with phonographers in all parts of the world. His last appearance on a public platform in advocacy of the Reform was at a meeting of the Bath branch of the National Union of Teachers, on 20th June, 1896, when "the oldest British schoolmaster alive" delivered to an interested audience a lucid description of the need and practicability of the orthographic reform which he had advocated for sixty years. In the following September increasing weakness and serious ill-health confined Sir Isaac to his house, and from that time his condition occasioned much anxiety to his family, for it became apparent that his gradually increasing weakness could have only one termination. But the mind of the veteran phonographer was perfectly clear, and he still manifested a keen interest in everything that related to his own life work. After he could no longer engage in what had always been to him a delightful labour, namely that of replying to his correspondents in the system of brief writing he had invented, he dictated replies to a shorthand clerk, and in this way kept up communication with his friends down to a very short time before his death.

When Sir Isaac completed his eighty-fourth year he was able to sit up in his chair on his birthday. He received the personal congratulations of his friends with all his customary cheerfulness, and conversed on

many topics, including the disposal of his library. At this time he presented through his old friend, the late Mr. J. W. Morris, a valuable collection of works of reference to the Bath Corporation. These books were placed in the Reference Library in the new Municipal Buildings. This proved to be the final public act of Sir Isaac's life. In the early morning hours of Friday, 22nd January, 1897, he passed peacefully away. In accordance with his wishes, his remains were cremated at Woking.

Soon after the death of the inventor of Phonography, a movement was initiated for the provision of a memorial, and this was subscribed to by a great number of phonographers in all parts of the world. It took the form of a Memorial Portrait, which was painted by Mr. A. S. Cope, A.R.A., and is intended to be hung in a public gallery. The Corporation of the City of Bath honoured the memory of a distinguished citizen by placing a mural tablet on the house in the Royal Crescent where Sir Isaac Pitman spent the closing days of his life. This was unveiled with befitting ceremony on the 15th July, 1901.





THE PHONETIC INSTITUTE. Built 1889. Enlarged 1901.

Plate 1.

Stenographic Sound Hand;												
Vowel Sounds		Single Consonant Sounds <i>h, l, r &amp; y are upstrokes, sup or down</i>										
e the, thee;	B /	be, bun, by	S °	self, so, us,								
a (and	D	do, done	T	it, out, to,								
α. a, an	F \	for, of off	V \	ever of over,								
au'awe, law,	Gn —	go, God, good,	W °	we, will, with,								
o O, owe,	Ho /	hand, have, he	Y /	yet, you,								
oo, who,	J \	Jesus judge,	Z °	as, is,								
i'eye, Ithy,	K —	can, Christ, come,	ch /	where, which,								
u'ewe,	L °	all, always, Lord,	ch \	change child								
oi, boy, voice	M ~	may, me, my	sh /	shall, ship,								
ou'how, thou	N ~	we, know, no,	th /	thought								
ai' of hi	P /	up, upon,	th. /	that, them,								
	R \	are, or, our,	th. \	usual, thing								
<u>Prefixes &amp; Affixes</u>   dis, dom. — co <sup>m</sup> — ment, inter, under, out,   re <sup>co</sup> m — circum — sub, super   dom, live tude   steon [pron tchon]   a <sup>co</sup> m — a <sup>co</sup> n — a <sup>co</sup> n [chon]   a <sup>co</sup> m [chon]   by <u>Representatives</u> — into, unto, o world, be, word, ward												
Double Consonant Sounds & or												
bl /	below	gw °	T	language	lx /	truth						
br /	breadth	gr +	example	cr /	twice							
dr /	direct	hl —	call	ub \	wil							
dur /	dwell	hr —	care	vr \	every							
fl /	full	hs +	except	shir \	short							
fr /	from	hr, T	question	thir /	through							
gl /	glory	pl /	people	thir /	their, there							
gr /	great	pr /	person,	thir \	treasure							

Drawn by Isaac Pitman, Stenographer

The first plate in "Stenographic Sound-Hand," Isaac Pitman's first treatise, published in 1837.


Plate 2

67-16 24 25 65 16

24 16 65 16

24 16 65 16

24 16 65 16



### Examples

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i
1	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
2	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
3	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32
4	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41
5	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
6	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59
7	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68
8	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77
9	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86
10	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95
11	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104
12	105	106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113
13	114	115	116	117	118	119	120	121	122
14	123	124	125	126	127	128	129	130	131
15	132	133	134	135	136	137	138	139	140
16	141	142	143	144	145	146	147	148	149
17	150	151	152	153	154	155	156	157	158
18	159	160	161	162	163	164	165	166	167

### The Lord's Prayer

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100 101 102 103 104 105 106 107 108 109 110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134 135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167 168 169 170 171 172 173 174 175 176 177 178 179 180 181 182 183 184 185 186 187 188 189 190 191 192 193 194 195 196 197 198 199 200 201 202 203 204 205 206 207 208 209 210 211 212 213 214 215 216 217 218 219 220 221 222 223 224 225 226 227 228 229 230 231 232 233 234 235 236 237 238 239 240 241 242 243 244 245 246 247 248 249 250 251 252 253 254 255 256 257 258 259 260 261 262 263 264 265 266 267 268 269 270 271 272 273 274 275 276 277 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528 529 530 531 532 533 534 535 536 537 538 539 540 541 542 543 544 545 546 547 548 549 550 551 552 553 554 555 556 557 558 559 560 561 562 563 564 565 566 567 568 569 570 571 572 573 574 575 576 577 578 579 580 581 582 583 584 585 586 587 588 589 590 591 592 593 594 595 596 597 598 599 600 601 602 603 604 605 606 607 608 609 610 611 612 613 614 615 616 617 618 619 620 621 622 623 624 625 626 627 628 629 630 631 632 633 634 635 636 637 638 639 640 641 642 643 644 645 646 647 648 649 650 651 652 653 654 655 656 657 658 659 660 661 662 663 664 665 666 667 668 669 670 671 672 673 674 675 676 677 678 679 680 681 682 683 684 685 686 687 688 689 690 691 692 693 694 695 696 697 698 699 700 701 702 703 704 705 706 707 708 709 710 711 712 713 714 715 716 717 718 719 720 721 722 723 724 725 726 727 728 729 730 731 732 733 734 735 736 737 738 739 740 741 742 743 744 745 746 747 748 749 750 751 752 753 754 755 756 757 758 759 760 761 762 763 764 765 766 767 768 769 770 771 772 773 774 775 776 777 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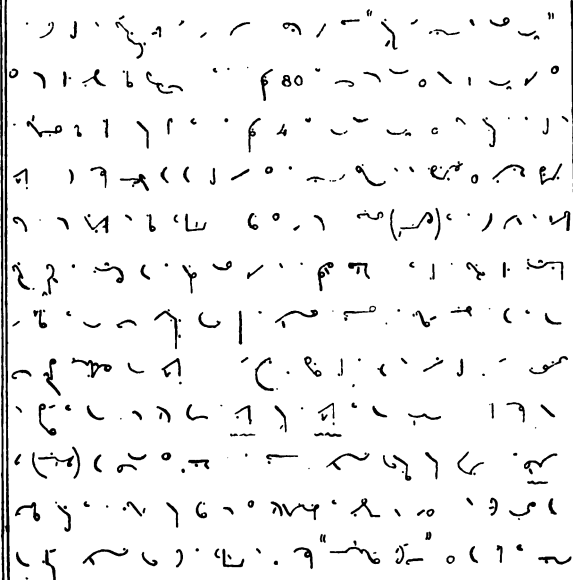
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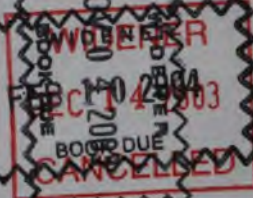


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